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A
DISPUTATION
CONCERNING
Church--Members
AND THEIR
CHILDREN,
IN
ANSWER
TO
XXI. QUESTIONS:

Wherein the State of such *Children* when *Adult*,
Together with their Duty towards the Church,
And the Churches Duty towards them
is DISCUSSED.

BY AN
ASSEMBLY of DIVINES

meeting at Boston in

NSW ENGLAND, *K*

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TO the READER.

IT is justly accounted one of the glories of the English Nation, that God hath honoured them with special light in some momentous Truths, above what he hath o-
ther Protestant Churches round about them. The mo-
rality of the Christian Sabbath, deep and spiritual in-
sight into those secret transactions between the Lord and the soules of his
elect at their first conversion, & also in their after walking in communion
with God, are usually observed as instances hereof. And of the same
kind, though perhaps in a lower rank, are those Truths about the in-
stituted Worship of God, which have been now for some years a con-
siderable part of those disquisitions, which do also at this day exercise
the most searching thoughts and ablest pens that are amongst us. And
truly the dealing of God in his Providence towards the people of this
Land, in bringing out the light and glory of these Truths, hath been
observable, and different from the way that he hath walked in to other
Churches. For, whereas they rose up from Antichristian apostasie
in Doctrine and Discipline both at once, together with his abominati-
ons in Faith, rejecting also his invasions in Church Order, inso-
much as neither the Head, the Pope, nor his Body in the principal
Members of it, the Arch-Bishops and Bishops with the rest of that
Hierarchical frame, have at all been so be found exercising the usur-
pations of the man of sin, in most of the Reformed Protestant
Churches since the first day of their rejecting Popery: In England
it was far otherwise, the head of Antichrist being indeed here cut off
by Henry the eighth, who justled him from his usurped supremacy
within his Territories, but yet (as is observed of him) he left his
body, the Hierarchy, continuing; which for many years not only
stood, but exercised in a great measure, the authority of the Dragon,
and made an image of the Beast, and caused as many as would not
worship it to be killed. And in this the Lord had doubtlesse a design,
more fully to lay open the loathsomnesse of the abominations of the my-
stery

flery of iniquity in this part of it; which by his infinite wisdom he effectually carried on all along, and hath in a good part accomplished in these daies wherein we live. For even from the first Reformation here begun, the Lord shone in upon the understandings of some of his precious servants, with such an evidence of light in these things, as overpowered their Consciences, and constrained them to bear a publick testimony against the remainders of Antichrist in the Land. In so much as from that time, till the day of the downfal of all the Hierarchical brood, God never suffered himself to be without his witnesses in this cause of his, whom he raised up, and whose right hand he held, to plead, and preach, and pray, and weep, and beleve, and print, and contend, and resist, and suffer, for the institutions of Christ, not only to silencing and reproach, but to banishment and blood it self some of them. And verily the number of the Martyrs of Jesus Christ, who have had his testimony and kept the Word of the patience of the Saints in this Land since the first Reformation, will be found not to be few, and their sufferings neither few nor light, whenever that dying wish of judicious and blessed Ames shall be accomplished as it deserves, viz. that a Martyrologie, in this cause of Church-Discipline under the Bishops, should be compiled and published to the world. And hence it is come to passe, that amongst the English Divines and Christians there is, as was said, more light in these points, and in sundry of their Church Assemblies and administrations more purity, then is so ordinarily to be met withal in others. Amongst all that have suffered for and searched into these Truths, they of New-England justly deserve, and will have, a name and a glory, as long as the earth shall have any remembrance of an English Nation; not only for their sufferings here under the iniquity of those bloody Fathers of the Church (as they loved to be stiled) the Bishops, though they bore as great if not a greater share therein than most of their brethren that staid behind them. But more especially will after ages honour them, for that great and high adventure of theirs, in transporting themselves, their wives, and little ones, upon the rude waves of the vast Ocean, into a remote, desolate and howling wilderness, and there encountering by Faith and patience, with a world of temptations, and straits, and pressing wants, and difficulties; and this, upon no other inducements, but that they might meet with him whom their souls loved in the midst of his Golden Candlesticks, and

see him as they have there seen him in his Sanctuary: An undertaking hardly to be parallell'd, unlesse perhaps by that of their Father Abraham from Ur of the Caldees, or that of his seed from the Land of Egypt.

And these are the men, Christian Reader, who are the Authors of this Disputation now put into thy hands; which deserves esteem and acceptance somewhat the rather on this account, because it comes from such as it doth, and is about such a Subject; even from men holy and learned, and is about that which they have searched into, as seriously, impartially and unprejudicedly, as any men are ever like to do in this world. Besides, that being themselves Officers to Instituted Churches of Saints, and this work of theirs being nexily and especially for the service of the Churches, they did therein lie under as direct and full an influence of the Spirit of Christ, and were on all accounts as compleatly wrapt within the promise for their guidance, as men can on this side Heaven. Tea 'tis about those Truths which they have, and at this day do suffer for; and therefore they are as likely as most others, to be the instruments in the hand of Christ, by whom he will communicate further light in these points: God is never behind hand with men, and as some special exercise of any particular Grace strengthens and encreaseth it, and establisheth the heart in it and with it; so, the obedience and faithfulness of his servants in any truth of Christ, especially if in an eminent degree and manner, engageth God to make known more of his counsel and will in that truth to such persons; and as under such an engagement the Lord looks upon himself. It is true indeed the Civil Magistrates of that Jurisdiction of the English in New-England that lies upon the River Connecticut, sent these Questions to the Magistrates of the Massachusetts, and they mutually called together sundry of the ablest Ministers of each Colony, and recommended to their search and considerations these enquiries thus stated, thus framed: And this was the happy rise of this Disputation; what is here thus tendered to the world, being the result and product of the consultations and debates on this occasion had, which was by the Elders met together agreed to, and accordingly presented, to the Magistrates of the aforesaid Jurisdictions respectively. But nevertheless, it was especially and nexily for the service of the Churches, the pious and careful Magistrates being herein indeed nursing Fathers to them; for they finding doubts; and

perhaps some differences about these points, likely to arise and disquiet the Churches, took this prudent and happy course, timely to bring forth such light, as might be to universal satisfaction, before darknesse had brought forth difference in judgment and perhaps practise also, and that contentions, and they such animosities and paroxysmes as would afterwards more hardly be healed, than prevented.

These Papers came some moneths ago to England, and it was then in his thoughts that had them in his hands, to have made them publick; but for some reasons which then prevailed with him he forbore, yet hath since given way thereto, partly expecting, according to some intimation which he had from New-England, that the Magistrates there would have ordered the printing of them. But, not hearing since that it is there done, he hath given way to the desires of some Friends here, who were acquainted with them, and with his having of them, that they should now thus be made publick; hoping withall, that what is done herein, will not be unacceptable to those Reverend persons, that were the authors of this Disputation. Especially considering, that God who formes the Spirit of man within him, and in an especial manner guides the hearts and studies of his servants, hath of late set a work some of them in Old England also, to search into these Questions, and communicate the issue of their enquiries to the world in print; whence likewise many more, are awakened to desire and long, for further light in these points about which the main part of this disputation is. Thus we see, the same great and blessed Spirit, that dwells and works in the hearts of all the Saints all the world over, hath, in this also, wrought the same work, on the hearts of the servants of Christ in Old England and in New: From whence there ariseth (though not such as quite to take away all difference in judgment, yet) a further oneness and agreement between them, than that of blood and language, as men of the same Nation; or that of the common Faith, as fellow-Saints and servants of the same Lord. Like as two needles of equall weight, toucht at once with the loadstone, will as they say, by a secret Sympathy move alike and at once, though at many miles distance one from another; so the hearts of the Saints in both Englands, as being toucht with the same Spirit, have moved together towards the same enquiries; although perhaps, as in other points, they got the start of most of us here in England, being in the light, and shaking of the dust of Babilon, before most of our Churches did;

did; so they may in this also, have had the same honour; there appearing in them a study of the Questions resolved in this Disputation, before there was any observable discovery of such a search here amongst us; the wise God keeping towards us both the like proportion still, so carrying on them and us, in an even pace, towards the same end of light and glory, which he will bring us both unto at last. And these Papers with the truths therein, having in themselves a tendency to this happy end, the midwifeing of them by the press into the publick and common light, in compliance with the aforesaid providence (they being likely otherwise to have lien hid in a private hand or two) cannot be lookt upon as at all injurious to those honoured and reverend Elders that were the Authors of them, much lesse to any others; for 'tis here done, (saving the Errata of the press) with such faithfulness as cannot be impeached.

And this is the rather said, because perhaps the Reader may have been deceived in some other Treatises, which have gone abroad, and generally been lookt upon, as the compilement of the Elders in New-England; whereas they had but one private person for their Author. So it is indeed in the 32 Questions, the Answerer whereof was Mr. Richard Mather, and not any other Elder or Elders in New-England, who likewise is the Author of the discourse concerning Church-Covenant printed therewith, which latter he wrote for his private use in his own Study, never intending, nor indeed consenting to its publication, nor so much as knowing unto this day how the copy of it came abroad into those hands by whom it is made publick, save that he conjectures some procured a copy of it from Mr. Cotton, to whom (such was their intimacy in his life time) he communicated it, as he writes in a late Letter to a Son of his now in England who it seems had enquired of him concerning those Treatises; and much lesse is there any truth in that which is said in the Title page prefixed to the Discourse of Church-Covenant, as if it were sent over to Mr. Barnard Anno 1639; Mr. Mather having neither acquaintance nor any intercourse by Letters with Mr. Barnard.

Nor indeed, are these Papers, now in thy hands, the declared judgment of all the Elders in New-England, there being but about twenty called together by the Magistrates to consult of these things, and declare their judgments in them, and of those twenty, two or three met not with the rest. They are nevertheless the genuine product of that Meeting

Meeting of Elders which on the forementioned occasion was held in the 4th Moneth 1657 at Boston in New-England.

What entertainment they will meet with now they are abroad it is not for me to say. They must now run the same hazard with other writings of this kind. Some passages there are which I fear will be wrested by one kind of men or other to serve their own hypothesis. It was in my thoughts, having some special advantages for it, here to have inserted something as to whose particulars for the prevention of such an abuse. But I shall only say this; let but such passages in this short tract as seem most to vary from what the Elders and Churches of New-England have been accounted to professe and practise, receive an interpretation as they will bear, from their own declared judgment, either in their platform of Church Discipline, or in other writings of their own, and I doubt not but it will be found, they are not warped from their former Faith and Order: Whatever some may think from this Treatise, or whatever Mr. Giles Firmin hath born the world in hand, in any of his late misrepresentations of them; whom I rather chuse to instance in, for that his reports of New England have perhaps therefore found the more credit, because he above others is not without advantages to know New-England, and the waies of the Churches there, better than it seems he doth.

The design of these enquiries being to search out what course the Lord Christ in his wisdom and faithfulness hath appointed, for prevention of the degenerating of Churches in successive generations, from their primitive soundnesse and purity, and of the polluting and prostituting of his holy things thereby; it is not altogether improbable, but some additional contribution of light, may be brought forth by them to us here in England, in that great case of ours, about the restoring of such of our Parishes as retain any thing of the essence of a Church in them (and thence are capable of a reformation) to such a measure of purity, as may take off the just distaste and dissatisfactions of such, as are conscientiously tender of their Church-Communion: The preservation of Churches pure, & restoration of them when collapsed, meeting in the end, do also run along together in the way thereto, and are to be accomplished by the same rules. May this in any measure be the fruit of this Disputation coming under the presse, it will never repent any of those persons that have had any hand therein; yea it will be their rejoycing and their glory in the day of the Lord Jesus; and, that so it may, the blessing of Heaven be upon it.



A

DISPUTATION

CONCERNING

Church--Members

AND THEIR

CHILDREN

IN

ANSWER TO 21 QUESTIONS.

Quest. 1. Whether any Children of confederate Parents be under their Parents Covenant and members with them.

Ans. Some Children of confederate Parents are by means of their Parents Covenanting, in Covenant also, and so Members of the Church by divine Institution.

For,

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Arg. 1.

Arg 1. They that are in that Covenant for substance which was made with *Abraham*, *Gen. 17. 7.* they are in Covenant, and Members of the Church, by divine Institution, because that Covenant doth inferre Church-Membership, as being the formall cause thereof; For 1. A people that are in that Covenant, are thereby the visible People or Church of God, *Gen. 17. 7.* compared with *Deut. 29. 12, 13.* by this Covenant the Family of *Abraham*, and so afterwards the People of *Israel*, was made and established the visible Church of God. 2. Many were in that Covenant, which never were in saving state of grace; Therefore that was the externall or Church Covenant, which God makes with his visible Church or People. 3. Circumcision sealed that Covenant, which was the distinguishing mark between those within and those without the Church.

But some children are in that Covenant for substance which was made with *Abraham*, *Gen. 17. 7.* as appears by sundry Scriptures, which being rightly considered, and compared, do inferre the continuance of the substance of that Covenant, whereby God is a God to his People and their seed, under the new Testament, *Acts 2. 39. Gal. 3. 14.* with *Gen. 28. 4. Rom. 11. 16, 17.* the Churches of the *Gentiles* do partake of the root of covenanting *Abraham* and of Olive or Church estate thereby: So *1 Cor. 7. 14.* The word [Holy] as applied to any sort of persons, and opposed to *Gentile*-uncleannesse is not in Scripture used for lesse then a Fæderall, or covenant-holinesse, but is often used in that sense, as *Ezr. 9. 2. Deut. 7. 6.* and *14. 2. 21.* and *26. 19.* and *28. 9.* *Dan. 8. 14.* and *12. 7.* *Rom. 11. 16.* and where a covenant or fæderal estate is asserted of children, what doth it but refer us to that Ancient and never revoked covenant, common

to all Nations, whereof *Abraham* was the Pattern-Father, *Gen. 17. 5, 7.* And if *Gentile* Profelytes of old, they and their children shared in that covenant, surely *Gentile* believers now are not behind them in the like priviledge; For the *Gentile* confederate believer is also a child of *Abraham*, *Gal. 3. 7, 29. Rom. 4. 11, 16.*

Therefore he hath that covenant of which *Abraham* was a pattern subject, made with him, *viz.* That God will be his God, and the God of his seed, *Luk. 19. 9.*

Arg. 2. Such children as are by Christ, affirmed to have a place and portion in the Kingdome of Heaven, they have a place and portion in the visible Church, and so consequently are members thereof. But so it is with some children, *Math. 19. 14. Mark 10. 14. Luk 18. 16.* The Proposition is evident, for the Kingdome of heaven or of God is sundry times used to expresse the visible Church, or Church estate, *Math. 25. 1. and 21. 43. and 8. 12.* And if the Disciples might or should have known that those children were to be admitted to Christ upon that ground, then the Kingdome-Interest of such children was a visible or knowable and apparent thing.

If any should expound it of the Kingdome of Glory, yet that would inferre the same thing: For neither may the Church exclude those from her fellowship, who by Christ his testimony are visible heirs of Glory, nor are any in ordinary course heirs of the Kingdome of Glory, that are not of Gods visible Church, and Kingdome of Grace here. And what is there spoken by Christ himself, as a standing truth, and that under the term of the Kingdome of Heaven (a term in speciall manner ap-

plied unto Gospel-Administration) cannot be doubted to continue in force in the Christian Church of the new Testament.

Arg. 3. If no children be members of the visible Church, then was not the Lord Jesus (when a child) a member of the visible Church, but none (we presume) will venture to say so of Christ.

Arg. 4. If it were not so, no children might be Baptized: For Baptisme being a Church Ordinance, and a seal of being incorporated into the Church, *1 Cor. 12. 13.* and succeeding circumcision, which was proper to the Church, none can be subjects immediately capable thereof, but Church-Members; Nor doth the Power of Officers, as such, extend further then to the Churches; as they cannot judge, so they may not Baptize them that are without, or non-members.

Arg. 5. They that are some of the Disciples intended in *Mat. 28. 19.* are Church-members. For as the term [Disciples] is ordinarily used for Church-Members, *Act. 6. 1, 2, 3, 5.* and *9. 26.* and *14. 22, 23, 27, 28.* and *18. 27.* and *Verf. 22.* with *Chap. 21. 16.* and *20. 7.* So this sense thereof best suits that place in *Matthew 28. 19.* because the Disciples there are the immediate subjects of Baptisme, and so of being called by God his name, the wonted Title of Church-Members, and because they are such as are subjected to Christs School, to Christs Doctrine and Discipline, and to the authoritative teaching of his Ministers, and observation of all things that shall be taught by them, *ver. 20.*

But some children are some of the Disciples intended in *Mat. 28. 19.* For 1. some children were some of those whom the Apostles in accomplishing that commission,

mission, did Disciple, *Acts* 15.29. Those whom the false Teachers would have reduced, under the yoke of circumcision, they were some of those whom the Apostles accounted Disciples, or whom the Apostles had Discipled: But some children were some of those, whom the false Teachers would have reduced under the yoke of circumcision, for they would have had both *Gentile* Parents and children circumcised, after the manner of *Moses*. *v. 1,5.* with *Exod.* 12.48,49. & *Acts* 21.21. And that the Apostles took in children with Parents when they were conversant in the work of Discipling, further appears from *Acts* 2.39. & 16. 15,31,33. & *Cor.* 7. 14. 2. Some children are under the promised teaching of God, *Isa.* 54. 13. And the Word there used is rendered Disciples, *Isa.* 8. 16. 3. Some children visibly belong to Christ, *Mark.* 10. 14. *Josh.* 22. 124,25. Therefore are Disciples. Compare *Mat.* 10. 42, with *Mark* 9. 41. 4. When Christ saith, Disciple all Nations, he bids gather the *Gentiles* into like covenant and Church-estate (for the substance thereof) which had been the portion of the *Jews*. Therefore he bids Disciple some children.

Arg. 6. They that are subjects of the Lords visible Spiritual Kingdom, servants and children of the Lords Family, they are Members of the Church, which is called the Lords Kingdom, and House and Family in the Scripture: But so are some children, *Ezek.* 37. 25,26,37. It is *Dauids*, i. e. Christs Spiritual-Gospel-Kingdom, that he there speaks of; and that in reference unto visible Sanctuary or Church-estate. That some children are the Lords Servants, see, *Leu.* 25. 39,41,42. And that, not by common right of Creation onely, or designation unto some particular service; but of special Redemption and

and conservation, there spoken of. And surely both childrens capacity so to be, and the Lords Grace and Favour so to accept them, was not greater then, than now. That they are children, sons and daughters of God, see *Rom. 9. 4, 16. Gen. 6. 2. Ezek. 16. 20, 21. & 23. 37.* And how were these children the Lords children properly and meerly upon the account of internal and spiritual regeneration? For that was not found in many of the children spoken of in the places mentioned, nor yet only by Creation, for so others were Gods children as well as the children of the *Jews*, and so the daughters of men were his daughters as well as the other were his sons, *Gen. 6. 2.* Therefore they are said to be Gods children, because of their Covenant, and Church relation unto him, which was common to all the children of the Church, and to none other, and so, *Ezek. 16. 8.* shews, being compared with *verse 20, 21.*

Arg. 7. If no children be members of the visible Church, then we have no well-grounded hope according to ordinary course of dispensation, of the salvation of any dying Infants. And the reason is, because salvation pertains to the Church, *Isa. 45. 17. Eph. 2. 12. & 3. 13, 16. Joh. 4. 22. Act. 2. 27. Luke 19. 9.* Those that are without the visible Kingdom of God, are visibly in the Kingdom of Satan; for he is the God of the world, *2 Cor. 4. 4.* And to him are men delivered, when they are cast out of the Church, *1 Cor. 5. 5. 1 Tim. 1. 20.* So if children live and die out of the visible Church, they live and die out of Gods visible Kingdom, and visibly in the Kingdom of Satan: And then what visible ground of hope (according to ordinary course) of their salvation? But to account the estate of all that die children, so hopelesse and forlorn, is contrary to the tender and rich mer-

cy of the Lord, and to the Doctrine of the Scriptures, and to Godly Parents most uncomfortable.

Arg. 8. If some children were Members of the Church of God in the old Testament, then some children are Members of the Church of God in the daies of the new Testament: But some children were Members of the Church in the time of the old Testament; which though a Truth, that we know not how any can deny, yet we may briefly evince and confirm thus; That children then were in Covenant, is expressely witnessed, *Gen. 17. 7. Dent. 29. 11, 12, 15.* And that they were in such a Covenant, or so in Covenant, as to be Members of the Church that then was, appears, because 1. They were in the same Covenant that their Parents or elder persons were in, and whereby they were constituted Members of the Church, *Gen. 17. 7. Dent. 29. 10, 11, 12, 14, 15. & 27. 9. & 28. 18. Jer. 23. 11. Acts 7. 38.* 2. They were subjects of a Church-Ordinance, never regularly applied to any out of the Church, *viz. Circumcision, Rom. 3. 1, 2.* They were *Israelites*, (*i. e.* In other words, Members of the Church of *Israel*) to whom pertained Church privileges, *Rom. 9. 4.* They were children of the Kingdom, and such as were capable of being cast out of Church-estate, therefore in it, *Mat. 8. 12. Rom. 11. 20. Jer. 7. 15. 2 King. 17. 20.* 5. They were visibly the Lords people by Covenant, even as the rest of the people were the Lords people, *Ezek. 16. 8, 20, 21.* 6. They were children of the House of *Israel*, as opposed to dogs, *i. e.* Persons out of the Church, *Mat. 15. 24, 26.* In a word, as oft as they are said or implied to be a part of the holy seed, of the holy people, of the Lords people, of *Israel*, of the Circumcision, of those whom God redeemed out of the Land of *Egypt*, to make them his.

his peculiar treasure, of the inheritance and congregation of the Lord, &c. So often are they shewed to be Members of the Church.

But all the Question will be about the consequence of the Proposition, and that may be cleared thus.

1. If the Church of the old Testament and the Church of the Gentiles, under the new Testament, be for kind essentially the same, then if children were Members of that Church, they are also Members of these: For if they be the same essentially, and the same for kind, then they have the same Covenant or general Form: Therefore that Covenant which takes in the seed or children, *Gen. 17. 7.* Therefore the seed or children are in and of the one Church as well as the other. But that the Church State then and now, was and is essentially the same, is evident, because it is the same Kingdom of God, and not another; which is taken from them, and given to us, *Mat. 21. 43. & 8. 11, 12.* One and the same sheepfold for kind, under one and the same shepherd, in which were the *Jews* first, and the *Gentiles* afterwards, *John 10. 16.* The *Gentiles* are fellow heirs with the *Jews* of the same body, and partakers of the same promise, *Eph. 3. 6.* We are in the same root and Olive, from which some of them were broken off, in which the Godly *Jews* not broken off, did still continue, and into which the rest shall be grafted in again in time, *Rom. 11. 17, 18, 24.* The conversion of the *Gentiles* is expressed in such a manner, as to be by coming into the *Jews*, and joyning with them, as *Japhet* must dwell in the Tents of *Shem*, *Gen. 9. 27.* And not that *Shem's* Tents must be destroyed, and other kind of Tents built for *Japhet* to inhabit: All which do shew that the Church then and now, is not essentially

(though

(though sundry waies accidentally) differing, but the same.

2. Again, If the consequence be not good, then it will follow that such *Jews* as were brought in by the Gospel into Church-estate, were great losers by embracing the Gospel; and the children losers by their Parents Faith, inasmuch as though in the former state, the children were Members with the Parents, yet now in the Gospel-estate, the children by this assertion are all left out. Yea, then the children of those *Jews*, *Acts 2.* Which before the Sermon, when their Parents wanted Faith, were in the covenant and Church-state with their Parents, are now after the Sermon, when their Parents are become believers, cast out or fallen out of the Church. A strange and harsh Doctrine, that the Faith of the Parents should set the children further off from God, and from his Church and covenant, than they were before.

3. Then also when the *Jews* shall be converted in the latter daies of the new Testament, the Parents must be Members of the Church, but not the children, and so they shall be in a worse condition than formerly, as not having their children in the Church with them, as formerly it was. But besides the harshnesse of such a conclusion, see the contrary, in *Jer. 30. 20. Isa. 61. 9. & 59. 21. & 65. 23. Ezek. 37. 25, 26.*

4. Although it be true that the Lord hath made difference between the Administration of his covenant and Grace to his people in these daies, from that which was in former times, yet as these differences are not in the essence of the Church-estate, but in accidentals and in degree, so where any alteration is made, it is still for our advantage and greater benefit; and therefore our cove-

nant is called a better covenant, and established upon better promises, *Heb. 7.22. & 8.6.* And from this it is that the burden of ceremonies which lay on them, is now taken off; the darknesse of Types and Shadows is now removed, and liberty is now given to worship the Father every where; whereas they were for many things tied only to *Jerusalem*, and every congregation of Saints is now a Church entire within it self, whereas then no single congregation had such Church - power and entirenesse of Jurisdiction; but all their congregations had dependance on *Jerusalem*, and all made up but one National Church. In these things and some others that might be named, there is alteration made, but still it is an alteration for the better and for our advantage. But now for the Particular in Question, If children were then Members of the Church, and now be not, here is an alteration made for the worser, and not for the better, not for our advantage but for our losse (for so it is, to have all our children put out of covenant and Church, and from all the priviledges thereof, *Josh. 22.24,25. Eph. 2.12. Psal. 87.3. Mat. 15.26.*) And therefore such a change may not be admitted. For Christ by his coming did not worsen the condition (not of the whole Church, but not) of any one person upon Earth, nor yet of any age or condition or sort of persons, *Luke 1.10.* And surely the child in minority (as the Church of old was, *Gal. 4.1,2.*) hath not a greater or larger place in the house, nor is in better condition in respect of priviledges, than the heir that is full of age. And who can think that a place in Gods House which is promised as so great a Benefit, in *Isa. 56.5,7.* And accounted such a Glory, Advantage, &c. *Rom. 3.1,2. & 9.4.* Should be no more but a part of that bondage and tutorage which

which belongs to children under age: Hence also add a fifth Argument to prove the consequence above mentioned.

5. If children were once Church-members and do not continue to be Church-members still, then their Membership must have been repealed by the Lord, who alone could make such an alteration: And if any should affirm that the Lord hath done it, it lieth upon them to prove it; and to shew when or where such an alteration was made, or such a repeal may be found. But in the mean time, though it be lesse needful to prove the negative, when-as the affirmative (in such a case as this) cannot be shewed, yet let these considerations amongst others that might be named for that purpose be duly weighed.

1. If the Lord had made such an alteration, (that now under the new Testament no children should be Members of the Church) then in all likelihood Christ or his Apostles would have made mention of it: Witnesse their Faithfulness: And how else should we know that the Lord had appointed any such alteration? but now Christ and his Apostles in stead of mentioning any such thing, do confirm the contrary, *Mark 10. 13, 14, 16. Acts 2. 39. 1 Cor. 7. 14.* And hence the Apostles writing Epistles to Churches, do sometimes expressly and directly apply their speeches unto children, *Eph. 6. 1. Col. 3. 20.* Which seems to imply that they accounted children to be parts and members of the Churches unto whom they sent those Epistles.

2. If the Apostles had taught any such alteration, surely the *Jews* who raised Objections and controversies about matters of far lesser moment, and who did so stumble at taking away the particular Rite of circumcision (for though they had Membership and Baptism

allowed to their children, yet that would not satisfy them, without the Rite of circumcision also, *Acts 16.3. & 15.1. & 21.21.*) And considering also how they had been from age to age wonted to this covenant and Church-estate of their children; Sure'y we say, they would have made a remarkable stand at this, if the Apostles had taught or practised this discovenanting or unmembring of all their children, and the Apostles would have needed both by preaching and writing to have bestowed much pains to have quieted them in this point: But of any such thing there is a deep and total silence in all the new Testament.

Quest. 2. Whether all children of whatever years or conditions be so, as, 1. Absent children never brought to the Church. 2. Born before their Parents Covenanting. 3. Incurrible of seven, ten, or twelve years old. 4. Such as desire not to be admitted with their Parents, of such an age.

Ans. Onely such children as are in their minority, covenant with their Parents; therefore not all children of whatsoever years and conditions. We do not hereby exclude such as being defective in their intellectualls, are as children in respect of their incapacity. That adult children are to covenant in their own persons, see *Ans. to Quest. 6th*. 2. Children in their minority, though absent, covenant in their Parents, and are Members with them, *Deut. 29.14, 15.* 3. Children born before their Parents covenanting, yet if in their minority when their Parents enter into covenant, do covenant with them and are Church-members, *Gen. 17.25.* The whole household of *Lydia*, the Jailor and others were baptized, therefore some children in minority which were born before, except we shall deny so much as one child in minority

notity then alive in all those houses. 4. There is no sufficient reason (at least ordinarily) to conclude a child of seven, ten, or twelve years old to be incorrigible, because a child at the ages mentioned is *infans in foro Ecclesiæ*, i. e. He hath no voice nor is capable of being heard in a Church way, therefore not incorrigible as to the Church. Their obstinacy at the years mentioned is not capital: By Gods Law, *Dent. 21. 18.* There is still place for hope, *Prov. 19. 18. & 22. 15.* 5. Their desiring or not desiring in their own persons during the ages forementioned, is not to be attended as the ground of proceeding in this case, because the ground thereof is the covenant founded upon Divine Institution, and in-depending upon such childrens desires.

Quest. 1. Till what age shall they enter into Covenant with their Parents, whether sixteen, twenty one, or thirty?

Ans. As long as in respect of age or capacity they cannot according to ordinary account, be supposed able to act in a matter of this nature for themselves, so long they shall enter in by means of their Parents covenant, because whilst they are children and in their minority, they are not otherwise capable of covenanting: When adult, they are to covenant in their own persons. If a precise and certain age may here be prescribed, surely it is safe to go, at least so far, as may answer the example, *Gen. 17. 25.* Where *Ismael* is admitted to the Seal by his Fathers covenant at thirteen years of age. Howbeit, the bounding of a dult and in-adult age, depending upon the judgment of prudence, much is to be left unto the discretion of Officers and Churches in this case.

Quest. 4. What Discipline a child is subject to, from seven to sixteen years old?

Ans.

Ans. 1. Church Discipline is taken either more largely for the act of a Church-member dispensed to a Church-member as such, by way of Spiritual watch, rebuke, &c. *Luke 17. 3, 4. Mat. 18. 15.* Or more strictly, for the act of the whole Church, dispensed by a Member thereof, as in case of publick rebuke, admonition, excommunication, *Mat. 18. 17. 2 Cor. 2. 3. 1 Tim. 1. 20.* In the first sense, children in their minority, are subject to Church Discipline immediately, but not in the second.

2. It is the Duty of the Elders and Church to call upon Parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to see as much as in them lieth, that it be effectually done, *Eph. 6. 4.* Officers and Churches respectively succeed Apostles in matters of ordinary practise.

3. Besides their subjection to Ecclesiastical Discipline, they are also subject to civil Discipline respectively according to their capacity, whether Domesticall, Scholasticall, or Magistraticall.

Quest. 5. Whether a Father may twice Covenant for his Children in Minority in several Churches?

Ans. 1. When a Parent is called to remove from one Church to another, he is also called to enter into covenant in that Church to which he removes. *Paul* was first baptized and in communion at *Damascus*, *Act. 9. 29.* Afterwards removed unto *Jerusalem*, and joyned to the Church there, *v. 26.* This, the very nature of order calleth for, because otherwise he can neither do all the duties, nor enjoy all the priviledges of a Member, in the one Church or in the other; not in the former, because now he dwelleth not with them; nor in the other, because though dwelling amongst them, he joyneth not

not with them in covenant.

2. When the Parent thus removing, entresth into covenant, his children then in minority covenant in him: The child and the power of Government over the child, must go together, *Prov. 29. 15.*

3. Hence it is the duty of Churches when they give Letters dimittory unto Parents, to insert the dismissal of the children then in minority with them.

4. Adult children yet under the power of the Parents and removing with them, are to give their personal consent unto this translation of their Membership, and so to be orderly dismissed and received with their Parents, otherwise they remain Members of the Church of which they were before.

Quest. 6. Whether the end of a Deputy Covenant, be not to supply personall incapacity, or whether Children ripe for personall Covenanting in regard of age, should Covenant by a Deputy, as others that are unable thereunto.

Ans. 1. Children in their minority, whose immediate Parents are in Church-Covenant, do covenant in their Parents; see the proof hereof in answer to Question 1.

2. Children adult ought to covenant in their own Persons. To covenant in our own persons according to the sense of this Question, is nothing else but an orderly and Church profession of our Faith, or a personall publick and solemn avouching of God, in an Ecclesiasticall way, to be our God, according to the covenant of his Grace, the great duty of the people of God throughout all generations, both in the times of the Law and Gospel: Pregnant and Illustrious examples whereof we have, in the time of Moses, *Deut. 26. 17, 18, 19. & 29.*

10, 11, &c. And of *Joshua*, *Josh* 24. 18, 27. Of *Asa*, 2 *Chron*. 15. 12. Of *Josiah*, 2 *Chron*. 34. 31, 32. So *Jer*. 50. 5. A considerable part of which Prophecie (for it extends it self also to the ages after Christ) we have accomplished *Nehem* 9. ult. & 10. 28, 29. The Priests and Levites and many others there named, and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, every one that had knowledge, and that had understanding, did cleave unto their Brethren, their Nobles, and entred into a covenant and an Oath, to walk in Gods Law; so of the times under the Law.

Concerning the times under the Gospel, in *1/a*. 62. 5. & 41. 34. 5. We read of the seed and off-spring of *Jacob* and *Israel*, that when they should be sprung and grown up (*b. e.* become adults) they should both by word and writing, by saying and subscribing with their hands, engage themselves unto the Lord. It is a part of instituted Gospel Worship. The same reason which called the Fathers to confession before, calleth the son also when adult. It went for good reason among the *Jews*, He is of age, he shall speak for himself, *Joh*. 9. 21. What more meet than that the confession of our Faith should be made with our own mouths when we are able? God avoucheth them in the same day when they avouch him. It is a special engagement of the adult person, to perform his covenant, *Psal*. 119. 106. I have sworn and will perform.

Lastly, It is a duty (compared with others) especially commended in the Scriptures, from the subject thereof, *viz.* A Believer, *Rom*. 10. 10. Every believer is a confessor. From the matter, the greatest Truth, *i. e.* The Doctrine of Christ Jesus, *Heb*. 3. 1. The Apostle of our confession, From the manner (others not being excluded)

excluded, as we are called thereunto, 1 *Pet.* 3. 15.) In a Church way, *Mat.* 16. 16, 19. *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 9. 13. in a special manner commends the subjection of the obedience of the Church astipulation of the *Corinthians*: From its excellency, a good Profession, 1 *Tim.* 6. 12. A good confession, *v.* 13. Its giving glory unto God, 2 *Cor.* 9. 13. Its victorious exemplarinesse in respect of men, *Rev.* 12. 11. The blessing upon the sincere performance thereof, *Heb.* 11. 13, 16. *Mat.* 10. 32. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Quest. 7. Whether as large Qualifications be not required of a Members child to the participation of the Lords Supper, and the priviledges of votes and censures, as were requirable of his Parents at their first entrance?

Ans. The holding forth of Faith and Repentance with an ability to examine themselves, by way of confession, to the judgment of Charity, were all requirable in the Parent for admission into the Church to full communion, and the same is requisite for the regular admission of the Parents child being grown adult, unto his full communion with the Church.

See the platform of Church Discipline, cap. 12. §. 7.

For the clearing of this Proposition two things are to be proved. 1. That they are to have Faith and Repentance. 2. That this Faith and Repentance must appear to others.

First, They are to have Faith & Repentance. 1. Because Examination is the duty, and Faith and Repentance are the matter of their Examination, without both the being and exercise of which, they cannot come worthily to the Lords Supper, which is the end of their examination. 2. From the end of the Lords Supper, which is instituted, not for regeneration, but for nourishment

and confirmation. 'Tis a Supper and a Seal.

That their Faith and Repentance ought to appear to others, is manifest thus; The Officers ought to be wise and faithful stewards, now to such it belongs not only to dispense a portion in reason, but to see also that those to whom it is dispensed, are meet to receive their portion, *Luke 12.42. 1 Cor. 4.2.* The Lords Supper cannot regularly be administred to any receiver, concerning whom personally, according to Truth, in the judgment of charity, the Minister cannot say, Take and eat, this is the body of the Lord Jesus which was given for you: But this the Minister cannot say with good Conscience to any one upon his meer having of Faith and Repentance without a visible holding forth of the same to others in their own persons, because both the exercise of reason and the exercise of Grace are requisite to the taking and eating here required. As this proves the assertion concerning the Officers, so *1 Cor. 10.15, 16, 17.* proveth the same concerning the whole body, because in a regular celebration of the Lords Supper, the whole Church doth judge all the partakers thereof to have spiritual communion with Christ crucified, and one with another as one body in him. It is the duty of the Church and Officers respectively (as the keepers of the holy things) so to discern between the holy and prophane, the clean and the unclean, as that the Sacrament may onely be administred unto worthy receivers, *Ezek. 44. 7, 8, 23.* But this cannot be, except the premised essentiall requisites be made appear to them in judgment of Charity. Concerning the power of voting, it is not rational that they should exercise a Church-power as to the administration of Church-Ordinances, which voting implies, who themselves are unfit for all Ordinances. They who are thus

thus unfit will abuse the Ordinances themselves, and admit and retain unworthy Officers and Members, and discourage the worthy, and therefore power in the hands of such is not for edification, but for destruction, contrary to the mind of Christ, 2 Cor. 10.8.

Quest.8. *Whether by Covenant seed, is meant the seed of immediate Parents onely, or of remote also?*

Ans. The Gospel by Covenant seed, intends only the seed of immediate Parents in Church Covenant, as appears from 1 Cor. 7.14. The Parents there spoken of are immediate Parents, their Progenitors were Heathens. The Gospel extends not the external Covenant beyond the immediate Parents: If neither of the immediate Parents be in Covenant, their children are unclean; see the Text. The next Parent may bring in his seed, though his Progenitors be unbelievers; and the next Parents may cut off their seed, though the progenitors be believers; witnesse the instances of *Ishmael* and *Esau*, Jer. 9.25, 26. Ezek. 32.29. Psal. 83.6. Mal. 1.4. Gen. 21.10. Otherwise there can no generation be given, where the Covenant Interest of posterity can expediently be bounded: *Depinge ubi sistam*, Shew us where we shall make our stand. The contrary exposeth the Churches to inevitable and intollerable impurities.

Quest.9. *Whether adopted Children and bond servants be Covenant-seed?*

Ans. Adopted children and Infant-servants, regularly and absolutely subjected to the Government and dispose of such heads of Families as are in Church-covenant, though they cannot be said to be their natural seed, yet in regard the Scriptures (according to the judgment of many Godly Learned) extend to them the

same Covenant priviledges with their natural seed, we judge not any Churches who are like-minded with them, for their practise herein: All which notwithstanding, yet we desire at present to leave this Question without all prejudice on our parts to after free disquisition.

Quest. 10. Whether the child admitted by his Fathers Covenant, be also a Deputy for his seed, without or before personal Covenanting, or without & before like personal qualifications in kind, as his Father was to enjoy when he became a Deputy?

Ans. The meaning of this Question in other terms we conceive to be this; whether the child of a person joyned in Church-Covenant by means of his or her immediate Parents Covenant, though such a Parent be not admitted to, nor qualified for full communion, nor have covenanted in their own person, whether we say, the child of such a person is to be baptized: Whereunto we answer, in these following propositions.

Propos. 1. Infants either of whose immediate Parents are in Church-Covenant, do confederate with their Parents, and are therefore Church-members with them. See *Ans. to Quest. 1.*

Propos. 2. It is the duty of those Infants when grown up to years of discretion, though not yet fit for the Lords Supper, to own the Covenant they made with their Parents, by entering therein in their own persons, and it is the duty of the Church to call upon them for the performance thereof, as appeareth by Scripture examples of persons both called to, and entering into Covenant, many of whom could not be looked upon as personally Gracious, and therefore not fit for all Ordinances.

nances and full communion, *Dent.* 29. 12, 14. *2 Chron.* 15. 12. *2 Chron.* 34. 31, 32. Where it is mentioned as the performance of a duty whereto they stand obliged by the Covenant made in their Infancy.

Propos. 3. Being accordingly called thereunto, if after Church-admonition and other due means with patience used, they shall refuse the performance of this great duty, or in case they shall (notwithstanding like means applied) any otherwise continue scandalous, it is the part of the Church to proceed with them to the censure of excommunication, because the Facts mentioned deserve excommunication, *2 Chron.* 15. 13. *Mat.* 18. 17. *2 Cor.* 5. 11. *2 Thes.* 3. 6, 14. And the persons are Church-members, being confederate with their Parents; and the Church as the matter requireth, administred Discipline to the Members thereof, without respect of persons, according to their capacity, *1 Cor.* 5. 12. *1 Tim.* 5. 21. Add hereunto the instance of those who are separated from the Congregation, for their non-observance of that Covenant, *Ezr.* 10. 3, 7, 8. Together with the examples of *Cain*, *Ishmael*, and *Esau*, not a little contributing to the truth of this assertion, by way of proportion.

See the platform of Discipline, cap. 12. §. 7.

Propos. 4. In case they understand the grounds of Religion, are not scandalous, and solemnly own the Covenant in their own persons, wherein they give up both themselves and their children unto the Lord, and desire Baptism for them, we (with due reverence to any Godly Learned that may dissent) see not sufficient cause to deny Baptism unto their children, these reasons for the affirmative being proposed to consideration.

1. Church-Members without offence and not baptized;

zed, are to be baptized.

The children in Question are Church-Members without offence and not baptized.

Therefore the children in Question are to be baptized.

2. Children in the covenant of *Abraham*, as to the substance thereof, *i. e.* To whom the promise made to *Abraham*, as to the substance thereof doth belong, are to be baptized.

The children in Question are children in the covenant of *Abraham*, as to the substance thereof.

Therefore the children in Question are to be baptized.

3. Children in the same estate with those children under the Law, unto whom the seal of the righteousness of Faith, because in that estate was by Institution Divine to be applied, the Precept for so doing not repealed, and the reason for so doing still remaining are to be baptized.

But the children in Question are children in the same estate (*viz.* regularly in Church-covenant) with those children under the Law, unto whom the seal of the righteousness of Faith, because in that estate was by Institution Divine to be applied, the Precept for so doing not repealed, and the reason for so doing still remaining.

Therefore the children in Question are to be baptized.

4. Either the children in question are to be baptized, or the Gospel dispensation forbids the application of the seal unto children regularly in Church-covenant, unto whom the Mosaical dispensation commanded it to be applied.

But

But the Gospel dispensation forbids not the application of the seal unto children regularly in Church-covenant, unto whom the Mosaical dispensation commanded it to be applied.

Therefore the children in question are to be baptized.

The contrary opinion infers that the Gospel bereaveth the children mentioned (at least in a considerable degree) of their glory, advantage, mercy, blessing, and that in this respect it casts reproach, yea brings disadvantage, a judgment, a curse upon them, *Josh. 5. 9. Rom. 3. 1, 2. & 9. 4, 5.* This seems to be a lesse Evangelicall Tenent, the nature of the Gospel being to enlarge and better, not to contract and diminish the external dispensation of Grace.

5. Children unto whom the Gospel testifieth both the promise and baptisme by vertue of that promise, to belong, ought to be baptized.

The children in question are children unto whom the Gospel testifieth both the promise and baptism by vertue of that promise, to belong, *Acts 2. 39.*

Therefore the children in Question ought to be baptized.

Obj. The Parent though a Church-member, owning the Covenant in his own person, and qualified according to the premises, is not admitted to full communion, therefore the child ought not to be baptized.

Ans. The Church-act onely, and not any other act (much lesse defect) of the Parent is by Divine Institution, accounted to the child. The membership of the child is a distinct membership, from the membership of

of the Parent. In case the Parents membership ceaseth by death or censure, the membership of the child remaineth still. The membership of the child is the same in kind with, and not inferiour to the membership of the Parent. Membership is a Relation, and therefore admits not of *magis* and *minus*, more or lesse: Members are better or worse, and communion is more or lesse; but membership admits not of degrees. *Benjamin* an Infant, but of an hour old, is as truly a son as *Reuben*, a man of twenty two years of age. The child is baptized by vertue of his own membership, and not by vertue of his Parents membership. The Parents death is not with us an obstacle of the Childs Baptism.

Propos. 5. The same may be said concerning the children of such persons in question, who being dead or necessarily absent, either did or do give the Churches cause in judgment of charity, to look at them as thus qualified, and such, as had they been called thereunto would so acted: For in Charity that is here done interpretatively, which is mentioned in the fourth Proposition expressly.

Propos. 6. Though the persons forementioned own the Covenant according to the premises, yet before they are admitted to full communion (*i. e.* To the Lords Supper and voting) they must so hold forth their Faith and Repentance, unto the judgment of Charity by way of confession in the congregation, as it may appear unto the Church, that they are able to examine themselves and to discern the Lords body. See the proof hereof in *Ans. to Quest. 7th.*

Quest. 11. Whether children begotten by an excommunicate person are to be baptized, he so remaining?

Ans.

Ans. We cannot for the present answer the following Arguments for the Negative. 1. Persons excommunicate are not members, and the promise made to the seed, belongs (under the Gospel) onely to the seed of immediate Parents in Covenant. 2. Excommunicate Parents are to be looked at in Church account as Heathens and Publicans, now the Church ought not to baptize the children of those which she is to account as Heathens & Publicans, because their children are unclean, 1 Cor. 7. 14. 3. To baptize the children of the excommunicate, is to have Church communion with the excommunicate: But those that we are forbidden to have civil communion with, 1 Cor. 5. 11. We are much more forbidden to have Church Communion with.

Quest. 12. Whether a Child born of a justly censurable person, yet not actually excommunicate, be to be baptized?

Ans. We answer affirmatively. 1. Because the child is a Church-member by virtue of his covenanting with his Parents. 2. Because the foundation of the covenant membership of the child, is Divine Institution, which imputes the Covenant Act only, and not any other Act of the Parents to the child.

Quest. 13. Whether a Members Childs unfitness, for seals, disableth not his seed for Membership or Baptism?

Ans. This question agreeing in scope with *Quest. 10.* We refer thither for Answer thereunto.

Quest. 14. Whether a Members Child be censurable for any thing but scandalous actions, and not also for ignorance and inexperience?

Ans. A Members child (like as it is with all other members)

members) is censurable only for scandalous sins, *Mat.* 18.15,18. *1 Cor.* 5.11. Consequently for ignorance and inexperience when scandalous, for all ignorance and inexperience though blameable, is not scandalous, *Rom.* 14.1. *Heb.* 5.12. *Luke* 9.55.

Quest. 15. Whether a Members Child must only examine himself, and may not be examined by others of his fitnessse for seals?

Ans. It is a duty of a Members child to examine himself, and yet he is also subject to the examination of others.

1. Because the Elders are to give an account, which necessarily presupposeth that God hath given them power in some respects to take an account, *Heb.* 13.17. *Acts* 8.37.

2. It pertaineth to them to see that the holy things be not defiled, by the accessse of any unclean and unworthy person, *Ezek.* 44.23. *Mal.* 1.6,7,9. & 2.1.

3. To teach by question and answer in the most profitable way, for the instruction and edification of the younger sort, and is commended occasionally, to the practise of the Churches, *Gal.* 6.6.

Quest. 16. Whether only Officers must examine in private or else publike before the Church?

Ans. Concerning their examination by the Elders in private, the former reasons conclude affirmatively, whereunto may be added occasionally that *James* and the Elders contrive and prepare in private, for the more orderly and quiet transactions of things in publick, *Acts* 21.22,23. 'Tis spiritual wisdom by preparing the stones beforehand, to prevent after noise in the building, *1 Kin.* 7.6.

Publick

Publick examination we also conceive to be regular, edification or due satisfaction of the Church calling thereunto, yet alwaies orderly, that is, by approbation of the Presbytery, and the immediate proposall of the questions by them, to the examine, *Rev. 2.2. 1 Cor. 14.40.*

Quest. 17. Whether the same grown Members Child must not be examined of his Charitable experience, before Baptism, as well as before the Lords Supper?

Ans. We think the Elders do well to take an account of children, concerning the Principles of Religion according to their capacity, before they be baptized. If the children spoken of in the question, be yet in their minority, their right unto Baptism being founded consequently upon the Covenant made in their Parents; this Examination is to be looked at as conducing to the better application, but not to the being of their Baptism. But if they be adult, they are to give an account of their Faith and Repentance, in their own persons, before they be baptized, *Acts 8.36, 37. Mark 3.6* See *Ans. to Quest 6th.*

Quest. 18. Whether baptized Children sent away from the Church for settlement, and not intending return, are continually to be accounted Members?

Ans. Baptized children though locally removed from the Church unto which they belong, are to be accounted Members, until dismission, death or censure dissolve that Relation, because Christ the Institutor of this Relation, onely by these waies dissolveth the same.

Quest. 19. Whether Historical Faith and a blamelesse life fit a Members Child for all Ordinances, and

Priviledges, and he must be examined only about them?

Ans. Not only historical Faith, i. e. The meer knowledge of the fundamental Doctrine of Faith and a blamelesse life, but also such an holding forth of Faith and Repentance, as unto judgment of Charity sheweth an ability to examine themselves and to discern the Lords body, is requisite to fit a Members child for all Ordinances and Priviledges, and his blamelesse life notwithstanding, a Members child is to be examined concerning the other qualifications.

That both the having and holding forth of Faith and Repentance, are requisite to fit for all Ordinances, see *Ans.* to *Quest.* 7th.

That a meer Historical Faith and every blamelesse life is not sufficient to hold forth these qualifications, appears,

1. An Historical Faith as meerly such, is insufficient, *1. Cor.* 13. 12.

A blamelesse life is either taken for such a conformity of the external man to the Letter, as exempts from censure, *Mat.* 19. 20. *Phil.* 3. 6. Or for such a conformity of the whole man as in judgment of Charity commends a person to the Conscience of the beholder, as in measure spiritual, *Phil.* 1. 10. & 2. 15.

A blamelesse life in the first sense is not sufficient to qualifie for all Ordinances, but for our fitness thereunto, the Rule calleth for a blamelesse life in the second sense, *Matth.* 3. 8, 9. *James.* 2. 21. Besides the holding forth of Faith and Repentance according to the Premises.

Quest. 20. Whether if a Church Member barely say, *I repent me, though seventy times seven times following*

ing he relapse into the same gross evils, as lying, slander, oppression, &c. He be to be forgiven, and not censured?

Ans. Though we alwaies acknowledge that the Holy One of Israel is not to be limited by man or Angel, as to the dispensation of his Grace, yet so far as we remember the Scriptures, seventy times seven times, i. e. 490 relapses into the same grosse sin, and repentance is an instance not extant there. Without the fruits meet for repentance, we are not called to forgive, *Mat. 3. 8. Luk. 17. 3.*

Notwithstanding a Brother offends seventy times seven times, that is, many times, a definite number being put for an indefinite, yet whilst God enables him to repent, it is our duty to forgive. 'Tis not the number of offences, but the holding forth of repentance in the offender, that is the measure of our forgivenesse, *Mat. 18. 22.* As God for Christs sake forgave us, so ought we to forgive one another, *Ephes. 4. 32.*

To say in words, I repent, and to gainsay it in deeds, is according to Scripture, not to repent, yea, rather to continue in impenitency, *Tit. 1. 16. Jam. 2. 18, 26.*

An ingenuious and solemn profession of repentance, nothing appearing to the contrary, is to be accepted as true repentance in the judgment of Charity, *Luk. 17. 3. 1 Cor. 13. 7.*

Quest. 21. Whether a Member under offence and not censured, or not with the highest Censure, can authoritatively be denied the Lords Supper or other Church privileges?

Ans. 1. None but the Church can Authoritatively deny

Priviledges, and he must be examined only about them?

Ans. Not only historical Faith, i. e. The meer knowledge of the fundamental Doctrine of Faith and a blamelesse life, but also such an holding forth of Faith and Repentance, as unto judgment of Charity sheweth an ability to examine themselves and to discern the Lords body, is requisite to fit a Members child for all Ordinances and Priviledges, and his blamelesse life notwithstanding, a Members child is to be examined concerning the other qualifications.

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ing he relapse into the same gross evils, as lying, slander, oppression, &c. He be to be forgiven, and not censured?

Ans. Though we alwaies acknowledge that the Holy One of Israel is not to be limited by man or Angel, as to the dispensation of his Grace, yet so far as we remember the Scriptures, seventy times seven times, i.e. 490. relapses into the same grosse sin, and repentance is an instance not extant there. Without the fruits meet for repentance, we are not called to forgive, *Mat. 3. 8. Luk. 17. 3.*

Notwithstanding a Brother offends seventy times seven times, that is, many times, a definite number being put for an indefinite, yet whilst God enables him to repent, it is our duty to forgive. 'Tis not the number of offences, but the holding forth of repentance in the offender, that is the measure of our forgiveness, *Mat. 18. 22.* As God for Christs sake forgave us, so ought we to forgive one another, *Ephes. 4. 32.*

To say in words, I repent, and to gainsay it in deeds, is according to Scripture, not to repent, yea, rather to continue in impenitency, *Tit. 1. 16. Jam. 2. 18, 26.*

An ingenuous and solemn profession of repentance, nothing appearing to the contrary, is to be accepted as true repentance in the judgment of Charity, *Luk. 17. 3. 1 Cor. 13. 7.*

Quest. 21. Whether a Member under offence and not censured, or not with the highest Censure, can authoritatively be denied the Lords Supper or other Church privileges?

Ans. 1. None but the Church can Authoritatively deny

deny to the Member his access unto the Lords Supper, because the power thereof is only delegated to that subject, *Mat. 18. 17.*

2. The Church cannot deny unto a Member his access unto the Lords Supper, untill she hath regularly judged him to be an offender.

3. The censure of admonition is the first act whereby a Church doth judicially declare a Member to be an offender; therefore till the censure of admonition be past, a Member cannot Authoritatively be denied communion in the Lords Supper, or other Church-priviledges, because of offence.

4. After the sentence of Admonition is past, the offender now admonished, may be (yea thereby is) Authoritatively denied to come unto the Lords Supper, and to vote in the Church, because he is judicially unclean, *Lev. 22. 3, 4. & 7. 20, 21. Mat. 5. 23, 24.* Though he be not yet Censured with the Censure of Excommunication.

5. All which notwithstanding, there are cases wherein a Brother apparently discerned to be in a condition rendring him (should he so proceed to the Lords Supper) an unworthy Communicant, may and ought regularly to be advised to forbear, and it is his duty to hearken thereunto.

6. Yet two things are here carefully to be attended.

1. That Brethren be not many Masters, taking upon them to advise and to admonish others to abstain without cause, or before the time, *James 3. 1.*

2. That none forbear to come worthily, which is their duty, because to their private apprehension, another is supposed

supposed (at least) to come unworthily, which is their sin.

7. In case the Church shall see cause to advise a Member to forbear, and he shall refuse to hearken thereunto, his refusal being also a violation of Church Order, addeth contumacy to his offence, and thereby ripens the Offender for Censure.

19 4th. 1657.
Boston. N.E.

E R R A T A.

P Ag. 3. l. 1. read *Ab. 15. 10. p. 6. l. 23. r. Ab. 2. 47. p. 14. l. 7. r. 2 Cor. 2. 6. l. 26. r. Ab. 9. 19. p. 18. l. 5. for reason r. season. p. 23. l. 30. for Church-act r. Covenant-act. p. 24. l. 19, 20. r. would have so. p. 26. l. 20. for in r. is.*
